

Every Child Learning Every Day



June 2003

An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

Volume 2, Issue 6

READY TO LEARN

When mom's sick, things can get out of hand

Idaho teachers have shared some of their favorite books and activities for children as part of Superintendent Marilyn Howard's Dinner and a Book Initiative.

This month's submission is from Debi Maughan, an early childhood special educator at Wilson Elementary School in Caldwell.

Book: "Pigs in the Pantry," by Amy Axelrod, illustrated by Sharon McGinley-Nally
Publisher: Simon & Schuster

Story synopsis : The mom in the story gets sick and her family decides to make her favorite dinner, Firehouse Chili, which gets a little out of hand.

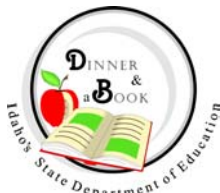
Activity: Firehouse Chili Recipe is included in the book. It includes many adaptations for a variety of tastes.

Spend some time discussing how the family measured ingredients and followed the recipe, or rather how they didn't follow the recipe. This elicits conversation about why it is important to follow directions.

Related Books/Topics:

Books by the same author: "Pigs in a Blanket" and "Pigs to Market." These books have been designed around the National Council of Teacher of Mathematics 13 Standards.

For more information about Dinner and a Book or to submit your own favorite book visit: www.state.id.us/dept/dinnerandabook.



Spark boys interest in reading

Dear Reader:

In Idaho, educators are learning a lot about children who struggle to read through the Idaho Reading Indicator, a 10 minute test of student reading skills given three times a year beginning in kindergarten and continuing through third grade.

One finding that consistently appears is a gap between the skill level of boys and girls.

For the most part, girls start off with stronger skills in kindergarten and perform better in reading than boys throughout their school years. This not a phenomena unique to our state, the gap appears nationally and internationally.

At the school level, Idaho is addressing this gap by providing extra help for children who are lacking skills and requiring professional development for teachers that focuses on the different learning styles among children.

Does this information provide lessons that can be applied to the preschool



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

years? Yes. Research and experiences tell us that boys and girls approach reading differently. They like different kinds of stories, read for different reasons, and master skills at different times.

Recognizing these differences we can help spark a preschool boy's interest in reading by:

- *Providing access to a variety of books that match his interests from baseball to bugs.

- *Letting him pick his own books.

- *Connecting books to activities in his life. For example, a book about camping or fishing may be read before a trip.

- *Offering magazines, comic books, and even web pages that may capture a young boy's imagination about the world around him or fantasy adventures.

- *Playing educational computer games that tie literacy skills such as letter recognition or rhyming games.

- *Becoming a reading role model. Boys need to see and read with their fathers or other male role models.

READY TO LEARN

Brighten up your activities with sunny lessons

Idaho's bright sunny days provide a perfect atmosphere for these lessons from "The Big Book of Monthly Ideas."

Math

On the floor or tabletop, use masking tape to make a circle and the sun's rays. Vary the length of each ray.

Make a pattern with blocks on one ray, and have the children match the pattern.

You also can have the children guess how many blocks they'll need to make a ray from blocks, and count out blocks (just up to five.)

Science

The sun is a powerful bleaching agent. It can remove color from paintings, furniture, and many other things.

By placing objects on paper, children can see that the sun can only change the color of things that it reaches, and



can learn early concepts through matching. You can teach lots of words and concepts: sun,

fade, shadow, print, bleach, and match.

You'll need blue and purple colored construction paper, a flat open space in the sun, and objects to place on the paper to print.

Place the objects on the construction paper with the flattest surface down.

Place these in direct sun or in a sunny window, during the noon hour is the best. Leave the paper out at least three hours.

Bring the bleached papers back into the room.

Scramble the items used to form the images on the paper. Have the children match the shape

to its image by placing the object on the proper shape.

Reading

Cut out a large circle from yellow bulletin board paper; then cut out several strips of orange bulletin board paper.

Read aloud *Sun Up, Sun Down* by Gail Gibbons (Harcourt Brace Janovich, Publishers).

Afterwards help the children to remember some of the facts about the sun, then print each fact on an orange strip and place the strips around the yellow circle.

Other books to read about the sun:

When the Sun Rose, by Barbara Helen Berger, published by Philomel Books

Sun Song, by Jean Marzollo, published by HarperCollins Publishers



RESOURCES

Children need special sun protection

Did you know that 80 percent of an individual's lifetime sun exposure happens before the age of 18?

Because of that, skin experts including those at the American Academy of Dermatologist and the Skin Cancer Foundation recommend that parents monitor and ensure their children are "sun safe."

Some tips for protecting kids from the dangers of sun exposure include:

- *Do not sunbathe.
- *Avoid unnecessary sun exposure, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., the peak hours for harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation.
- *When outdoors, use sunscreens rated SPF 15 or higher. Apply them liberally, uniformly, and frequently.
- *When exposed to sunlight, wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, broad-brimmed hats, and UV-protective sunglasses.
- *Stay away from artificial tanning devices.
- *Teach your children good sun protection habits at an early age: The damage that leads to adult skin cancers starts in childhood.
- *Examine your skin head to toe at least once every three months.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some facts from the American Academy of Dermatology and the Skin Cancer Foundation:

- *You can burn on a cloudy day.
- *It's important to use sunblock all year (even in winter).
- *Hats, T-shirts, and sunglasses are all part of a sun-smart kid's safety gear.
- *Waterproof sunblock can protect kids for up to 80 minutes of splash-splash fun.
- *The sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation can penetrate many types of clothes.
- *UV can also go through automobile and residential windows.

For more information visit: www.aad.org or www.skincancer.org

NUTRITION

Help children explore world through food

A great way to explore the world is through meals. A map or a globe can be a part of this food activity with children.

This recipe for Sweet and Sour Vegetables could be used to highlight an Asian country.



Sweet and Sour Vegetables

- 9 large carrots
- ½ green pepper
- 10 oz. can of pineapple chunks

To prepare: Peel and cut up carrots and pepper and combine with drained pineapple chunks

(reserve juice).

Sauce

- ¼ cup pineapple juice or water
- 3 tablespoon of sugar
- 3 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon of cold water

To prepare: Combine juice or water, sugar, vinegar and soy sauce in pan. In a separate bowl, add cornstarch to the 1 tablespoon of cold water and mix until smooth. Place pan over medium heat and slowly add cornstarch mixture, stirring constantly.

Bring to boil and stir until sauce thickens.

Pour sauce over vegetables (raw or steamed) or use as a vegetable dip.

ACTIVITY

Point out where the children live on the map or globe.

Point to other countries and explain that children live there too.

Choose a country to correspond with the recipe.

Explain that people may look different and eat different foods, but they are the same inside.

When new foods are introduced as part of an activity, children are more likely to accept the food as part of a meal.

Serving for a 1 to 5 year old is ½ cup sweet and sour vegetables, ¼ cup cooked rice.

READY TO LEARN

Statistics made clear by charts

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics offers simple tips to help parents help children understand math.

This month's skill — probability and statistics. Using graphs and charts, people organize and interpret information and see relationships. Graphing is another way to show and see information mathematically. Charts, including calendars, can be used to organize everyone's weekly activities.

Even older children in elementary school may find it hard to keep track of calendars, but when adults use them with children, calendars can be helpful tools to learning and understanding how we organize information.

Practically everything we do is "chartable. For

example, you can take the stickers from bananas, apples, or pears and place them in columns on a piece of paper. At the end of the week you can count them up to see how many of each type of fruit you ate.

Graphs help some children reach a greater understanding of numbers because they can see quantities displayed on paper. This may help them understand math more than looking at numbers on paper.

Use color forms or stickers to record any regular daily activity. Put a color form next to the phone each time it rings, or have people put one next to the front door to record the number of times someone enters.

ACTIVITIES

Take a swat at some bubbly summer games

Summer is a great time for playing with water and bubbles. The Idea Box (www.theideabox.com) offers these activities:

Painting With Water

Supplies: large paintbrushes, pails or cans of water

What to do: Have children "Paint" outside on walls or doors, cars, or the sidewalk. This is very fun for those hot muggy days!

Fly Swatter Painting

Supplies: New fly swatters, large mural paper taped to a wall (outside is best), washable paint thinned with water on plates, and a hose for clean up

What to do: Take the children outside to an area where you have the activity set up. Encourage them to get paint all over the swatters so they are good and drippy. Take a swatter and hit the paper and show them what will happen (a print plus splattered paint everywhere). Tip: Putting children in swim suits makes for an easy clean up.

Bubble Bubble Pop Pop!

Supplies: Bubble solution, white paper, and food coloring

What to do: Take bubble solution, white construction paper, shallow pans, and food coloring outside. Pour bubble solution into several shallow pans. Squeeze drops of different color food coloring into each pan. Help your child dip the bubble wand into the pan and blow bubbles onto the paper - make sure you use all the colors.

Fly Swatter Bubbles

Supplies: Clean fly swatter, bubble solution

What to do: Many young children struggle to "blow" a bubble with a normal bubble wand. Fill shallow plastic bowl with bubble liquid and provide each child with a new clean flyswatter (the plastic and wire type.) They dip the end in and then swish it through the air, creating tons of bubbles. Tip: Stand each child far enough apart that they don't swat each other!